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SAVED BY TRICKS

DEVICES USED BY GUIDES WHERE THE FISH WONT BITE.

Jiggering and Listering Effective, Though Regarded as Unsportsmanlike—Secret of Guides to Please Employers—Secrecy of the Woods—Ways of the Fish

GARPE BASIN, CANADA, AUG. 10.—A salmon fisherman of experience will declare that he has owed a considerable portion of his pleasure and of his success to his guide. To a young fellow who was triumphant in displaying a grand catch of several large salmon, the question was put by an experienced fisherman, "How many of those did you hook yourself?" To which the reply was, "Well, I played them all, but every one was really hooked by my guide."

There was nothing unusual about this statement, except perhaps its frankness for on most of the large rivers it is the guide who does a good deal of the casting. For one thing, it is no easy task to keep up a diligent whipping of the pools for hours at a time. Salmon rods, with their huge reels are of necessity heavy.

It is well known that no respectable fisher will think of rising if he has caught sight of the angler, so that as a rule the fly has been cast with a long line from a point about 100 feet from the salmon lying at the bottom of the pool.

The back cast must be carefully and somewhat laboriously made, and the rod kept in constant movement when once it has touched the surface. There are many city men whose unaccustomed muscles can keep up this kind of thing for very long.

Then the guides are commonly so clever and have such control over the line that soon becomes a delight to sit back and watch the fish rise from the water and come up through a delightful haze of cigarette smoke, waiting for the eager signal.

"Come! Saumon, saumon!"

Sometimes the lazy salmon are content to lie with their great fins and tails waving in the rippling stream, without responding to the inducements of the fly fishermen. Then, while the employer is not watching, or sometimes, alas, when he is the instigator, the fly is allowed to sink, and by careful and adroit manipulation is brought directly underneath the unsuspecting fish. A quick jerk, and the fish is hooked. The fly is under, and the light is on in good earnest again. Many and many a good fish is caught that way. True, it is called jiggering and is seldom acknowledged by sportsmen, but there is nothing radically wrong about the practice, especially when vacations are short and fly absolutely refuse to rise properly.

When hooked foul the chances are not in any means all in favor of the man. The fly can bring his broadside to bear, and can pose his whole body against the hook and so make it impossible for the fish to shake free.

One clever old fish of upward of fifty pounds was hooked foul here lately. The prickle of the hook was probably painful and the big fish deliberately jumped up a few feet aside at the head of the pool, and bitancing in the usual way at the summit, did not attempt to wriggle on as would nature expect, but slowly slid down again, in friction of the mossy surface rubbing the double hook neatly.

Perhaps it is no more than might be expected to find that the guides are such good natured fellows that they are most likely to be beaten by salmon. A lessee of an expensive river was lying back in the shade of his hat over his eyes, while his guides tried to wake up the sleepy big fellows in the pool under a bridge, when a movement in the brush directed his attention to where one of the men was cutting a long stout pole.

When he had smoothed the end of it he fastened to it with a bit of string a lustrous looking gang of three huge hooks which were attached to the place of a fly to lead the fish. The man pushed down the hooks directly under the finest of waiting fish. There was a fierce snap upward, which pulled his hooks into the belly of the salmon and at the same time pulled them clear of the smoothed, slippery end of the pole, and the owner was signaled to come and play the fish.

He had a long stern fight with this fish which he declares gave him the best sport he had ever had. When it was gaffed, the lower end of the pole, the man declared, removed the fish with a swift jerk from the hook and tied on the fly again.

The angler made only one comment, and it set a grin going on the faces of the uninitiated children of the woods:

"Curious, that! The fly you were fish with has changed from a Jack Scott to a Reverend Doctor during the fight."

For the guide had removed the worm hook from his old felt hat in his haste to substitute a fly for the triple drag salmon.

On another occasion, when other methods failed, the guides were so cut up because their good natured employer had been so wretchedly outwitted that they resorted to what used to be known as "listering." A huge fambaued fold birch bark was fastened to a castick and held over the pool while the guide companion used the ancient spear, which was nothing more than a thin inch wide chisel with very broad, sharp shoulders.

This was struck into the back of the fish so as to sever the backbone and disable instantly. The ingenuity of the device, tricking and was the result doubtless of long experience in the difficulty of getting a heavy, powerful fish from jerking it free from an ordinary spear.

The successful way in which these men brought their catch of three good fish to their master the next morning showed that they knew their actions had not been altogether such as a sportsman would approve of. They were sorry for his disappointment, wished to make it up to him, and in a momentary hatred for the salmon which would not for his pleasure allow themselves to be circumvented.

Probably the majority of salmon fishers men have taken the sport from the guides. A nearly every beginner has known the mainly courteous way in which guide has at critical moments taken rod from his hands and given a master exhibition of how to do the right thing.

In fact, unless the fisher is himself a seasoned bait, it is the guide with the rod who is invariably constituted master of ceremonies when the fish has been struck. His experience directs when to pull the strain and when to give the fish the tip.

When the hand is on the fish, the fish grasped up toward the end and the fisherman goes toward the incoming fish, knows that in some mysterious manner has ascertained that the salmon's curiosity is about run, and that it is time for administration of the dead slouch. We know the cool spots where it will be so to dig a temporary grave in the cold ground for the fish to lie buried for a few days or so. It can be placed in it.

How else does it one cannot say, but it is that when it is time to go down to the station again the fish killed days before is taken home, and the fisherman's instructions are closely followed. The caught salmon are taken home to be washed, and they will always be found to be perfectly preserved and as good as though taken from their native element.